OUR LATIN-AMERICAN POLICY

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TWENTY years ago a practical application of the Monroe Doctrine seemed to be called for and was made. Subsequent events have not weakened it, but rather enlarged its scope and increased the esteem in which our people hold it.

The relations between the United States and the countries of South and Central America—commonly spoken of collectively as Latin America—have as a rule been friendly, though not intimate. Those countries on the one hand have relied for their commercial and financial connections almost wholly upon Europe and treated their relations with the United States as mostly official and perfunctory. The United States, on the other hand, has viewed those relations in pretty much the same way, while until within a very short time our capitalists, producers and manufacturers have failed to realize the advantages of trade and intercourse with the peoples of the South American continent. The one marked exception to this condition of things has been the Monroe Doctrine—a policy whereby the United States declares itself prepared to resist any aggression by a European state upon the independence or territorial integrity of any other American state. The policy simply means protection and security for any other American state, and, maintained and exercised in good faith, cannot easily be objected to by any other American state. In that view it is a policy directed against Europe only, and until recently it represented our entire Latin-American policy.

Within a short period, however, the United States has developed a distinctive rule of action in respect of Latin America, which in one sense certainly is in the interest of Europe and not against it, and whose only connection with the Monroe Doctrine is the desire and purpose of the United States to avoid any clash with Europe over the practical ap-

plication of the Doctrine. Perhaps what has been done in the course of developing the new policy may be considered as a tacit acknowledgment and acceptance of the claims of European jurists and statesmen that if the United States assumes to protect the political independence and territorial integrity of other American states it must see to it that such states abide by and perform their international duties and obligations. At all events, that is what the United States has been doing and is doing with the acquiescence of European states in various well-known instances. Instead of standing by and looking on while a European state enforces its international rights as against a lawless or defaulting American state, the United States has intervened, has in effect warned the European state concerned off the premises, and has itself caused international justice to be done. It has undertaken the protection of the lives and property of Europeans when threatened by riots and revolutionary movements. It has exacted indemnities and penalties for injuries suffered by them, and has collected debts for European states and their citizens by occupying ports and collecting and applying customs revenues. In cases of this sort it has, in effect, charged itself with duties and trusts analogous to those devolving upon the receiver of a bankrupt corporation.

Consequently, whether the supplemental policy above sketched is or is not the logical and inevitable sequence of the Monroe Doctrine, it is now no longer aimed at Europe only, but also trenches upon American states themselves. It is a policy, indeed, which as respects such states impairs their independence. It does not alter the case that the intervention of the United States in the manner described may be for the best good of such states. Such intervention is in clear conflict with the basic principle of international law, which asserts the absolute equality *inter sese* of all states, great and small.

But our Latin-American policy, hitherto practically limited to the Monroe Doctrine and its corollaries, has necessarily taken on a wholly new development by reason of our acquisition of the Panama Canal and the Panama Zone. The United States is now a South American power, with extensive territorial interests acquired at immense cost. It holds the Canal in double trust—on the one hand for the people of the United States, on whose behalf it is bound to make the operation of the Canal efficient and, if possible, fairly

remunerative; on the other hand for the world at large, on whose behalf it is pledged to give to all nations the like facilities in the use of the Canal upon equal terms. In both relations it has assumed to protect the Canal against all assaults from every quarter, whether they come in the shape of military invasion or of economic competition. Hence, on the one hand the United States has fortified the Canal and will undoubtedly take all other measures necessary to protect it against military attack. Hence, on the other hand, the United States has initiated measures looking to the pre-emption of all other routes practicable for a rival canal.

It sufficiently appears from these premises that the Latin-American policy of the United States now has the following objects:

First. To secure every American state against loss of independence or territory at the hands of a European Power, as means to which end the United States will resist aggression by such Power by force of arms, if necessary, while, in the case of the weak and backward states, removing any excuse for such aggression by itself seeing to the performance of their international duties;

Second. To secure its interest in the Panama Canal by whatever military measures may be appropriate or necessary; and

Third. To protect its interest in the Panama Canal and Zone by whatever measures may be appropriate and necessary to prevent unjust and ruinous competition.

These being the general objects aimed at by our present Latin-American policy, what is the best and most obvious course for the United States to pursue in order to ensure their accomplishment? By way of preface it may be well to note that an extensive discussion of the Monroe Doctrine in the press and otherwise has been going on during the last twenty years and has elicited some novel propositions. The most drastic of these is that the Monroe Doctrine has become archaic—not only fails to serve any useful purpose, but impairs our freedom to consult our own interest—and should without hesitation be consigned to the scrap heap. An ex-President of the United States qualifies that proposition by contending that the Monroe Doctrine should no longer be deemed applicable to those of the South American states which maintain stable and law-abiding governments and whose growth in wealth and power and all the elements of

modern civilization puts them on a plane with all responsible states. And one of the great newspapers of the country, having its eye on the Panama Canal and the Panama Zone, suggests that our line of protectorates or quasi-protectorates should be extended to countries bordering on the Caribbean Sea, but should go no farther.

These propositions seem to partake of an academic rather than a practical nature. It is hardly conceivable that if another American state desires and needs help as against European or other foreign aggression, the United States will not respond to its appeal, whether the state attacked is a great state or a small state and whether or not it borders on the Caribbean Sea. In all probability it may be safely assumed that the Monroe Doctrine, as originally conceived and designed to accomplish the one end originally contemplated, will not be repudiated by the American people in our day and generation. The true question, therefore, is: How shall the Latin-American policy of the United States be so shaped and enlarged that, while preserving the Monroe Doctrine in its original spirit and application, it shall at the same time adequately provide for and protect the new interests the United States has acquired through its proprietorship of the Panama Canal?

The efforts of the present Administration for the pacification of Mexico distinctly point the way to the course to be pursued. The striking feature of those efforts is the co-operation between the United States and South American states. That the co-operation has been highly beneficial to all interests concerned is unquestionable, and, should normal conditions in Mexico follow, as now seems probable, it must be largely credited with the result. Nevertheless, and however more or less valuable such co-operation in this particular instance, its chief value lies in its tendency to introduce into our Latin-American policy a new and important factor, which in all respects—ethical, political and practical—should operate decidedly to the advantage of the United States and all American states.

Our Latin-American policy as represented by the Monroe Doctrine has always been wofully weak at one vital spot. The United States, the originator of it so far as America is concerned, failed to receive any substantial support for it from Great Britain except for a comparatively short period. Ever since, the United States has been the sole asserter and

sponsor of the Doctrine. The other American states have been content to enjoy its advantages while in no way assuming any share of its burdens. Realizing that the United States assumes those burdens not from benevolence but from considerations of self-interest, they have no special reason for gratitude, and as a rule exhibit none. On the contrary, the more they have gained in wealth and general importance, the more their pride seems to take offence at a doctrine which, in a degree at least, makes them stand to the United States in the relation of wards to a guardian. Further, the proceedings by which the United States has felt constrained to compel some of the smaller and less advanced American states to perform their international duties have unquestionably excited uneasiness in all. They feel those proceedings, however temporary or however beneficent in purpose and result, to be distinctly menacing and to indicate purposes and ambitions on our part quite inconsistent with their dignity and safety as independent states. This feeling has been greatly intensified by the lawless violence which robbed Colombia of its territory for the purpose of the Panama Canal enterprise. It thus comes about that, in its relations to Latin America and Europe respectively, the United States now figures as a self-appointed guardian of the independence of the one and the self-appointed guarantor of the rights of the other—both the guardianship and the guaranty being submitted to rather than desired, and neither gaining for the United States any special consideration or reward—while our glaring invasion of Colombia's sovereignty makes us "suspect" in the eyes of all Latin America. A futile attempt to remove or lessen the suspicion led to the ex-President's suggested qualification of the Monroe Doctrine already noted. This situation is obviously anomalous and unnatural and cannot be expected to last. The best practical solution of its difficulties as already intimated would seem to be indicated by the course of the present Administration in its handling of the Mexican situation. For the rôle of sole dictator of affairs on the American continent as now undertaken by the United States, there should be substituted cooperation between the United States and the other principal American states for the promotion and protection of their common American interests. In short, what is to be desired in place of the present unsatisfactory status is a Concert of American states, with powers, objects, and means of accom-

plishing them defined with all practicable precision. The detailed provisions of any plan for such Concert it is unnecessary now to consider. But certain of the great objects to be attained have already been indicated. The Concert would put all American states behind the Monroe Doctrine, so enlarged as to mean the protection of every American state not only against European aggression but against foreign aggression from whatever quarter. The discretion of the Concert would decide when in the common interest it was necessary and proper to so far invade the independence of any particular state as to compel it to recognize and perform its international duties, and would also determine by what state or states the decision of the Concert should be enforced. And, the United States having become an important South American as well as North American Power by virtue of its construction and ownership of the Panama Canal—a purely American enterprise world-wide in its significance and consequences, and which the United States proposes to carry on not merely for its own account, but as trustee for all nations and peoples—the Concert would unquestionably make appropriate and adequate provision for its security and defense against all dangers, whether military or economic.

The advantages of the Concert for the accomplishment of these several ends are apparent. In place of being a self-constituted agency, the Concert would hold credentials from a practically "United America" as represented by the states the most populous, the most powerful in material resources and military strength, and the most advanced in all the constituents of modern civilization. It would wield an authority well-nigh irresistible, not merely because of its superiority in physical forces, but because the diverse interests, policies, and rivalries of the many states concurring in a result would be a practical guaranty that the end in view was the general interest of the whole Concert, and not the special interest of any particular state. It would follow that as a rule, and except in extraordinary cases, a mandate of the Concert might be expected to be self-executing and not dependent upon the use of physical force for its effectiveness.

Still another important advantage of such an American Congress remains to be stated. The Monroe Doctrine is without recognition in international law. It exists as a policy of the United States, firmly settled at this moment, but subject

to change at pleasure. But an established Concert of American states on the lines and for the purposes already outlined might well challenge recognition as coming within the purview and entitled to the sanction of international law. A Federation of the World—a Parliament of Man—may be a dream. But if it ever becomes a reality, it will be by a process of gradual approach and as the result of a merger in a world-wide unification of many groups of nations which, through geographical proximity, racial affinities, common institutions and modes of thought, have been led to form themselves into local federations for the attainment of certain common ends. In the last analysis, the true basis of international law is the usages and practices of the great civilized states of the world. As those usages and practices necessarily change with the advent of new conditions, international law, which is a progressive science, also changes in order to meet the new conditions. It cannot be doubted, for example, that the conception of the absolute equality of states and the unconditional independence of each is now displaced by the conception that every state is perforce a member of an International Society of States and by virtue of that relation both acquires rights and assumes obligations. The whole International Society is in theory at least the common superior by which the rights and obligations of each member should be determined and enforced. In point of fact, of course, and while the logical status is perfect, there has been no world-wide organization of civilized states and no action by them as a whole. On the other hand, international controversies often arise which are local and limited in their nature and in which only a group of states has a substantial interest.

In such cases, long established international practice seems to justify the conclusion that the particular group concerned may legitimately settle such controversies even if the settlement involves over-riding the resistance of a particular state. The principle applied in every such case is of course the general welfare—the greater good of the greater number—the common interests of all the members of the group rather than the special interests of one or a few members. The many instances in which groups of European states have thus settled controversies between their members, always on the plea of acting for the good of the whole group, are too well known to need citation. That their de-

cisions have often been criticized and sometimes with only too much justice may be admitted. Yet on the whole the operation of the various European concerts has been considered to be beneficent especially in their tendency to prevent wars between the members of a group. For that reason and on the grounds already stated, and because there can be no useful and effective co-operation between states for common objects unless each can be made to subordinate its special interest to the general interest, international law must be regarded as acquiescing in the authority of a group of states to control the actions of its members whenever there is a real exigency calling for such control and provided always that the authority is exercised in good faith, by the use of reasonable and appropriate means and with all practicable regard to the rights, interests, sentiments, and traditions of the several peoples concerned. Tried by such a test, an American Concert established for the objects and with the purposes already stated, and providing for their accomplishment through strictly necessary and appropriate agencies, might confidently contend that principle as well as the usages and practices of civilized nations amply justify its existence and purposes. Obviously no rule of international law can be violated by an American Concert undertaking to protect every American state against European or other foreign aggression. So it is difficult to contend that such a Concert's intervention in the affairs of an American state with no other aim and no other result than to bring about the performance of international duties is not calculated to strengthen the ascendency of international law rather than to weaken it. And it is yet more difficult to believe that an American Concert for the maintenance and security of the Panama Canal should not be recognized as a fit subject for the protection of international law—on the contrary, as a neutralized canal enuring to the benefit of humanity at large, the Panama Canal might well be held as matter of international law to be under the guardianship of each and all of the civilized states of the world. Modern writers on international law concur in the principle which is thus stated by one of them—" Canals which connect great bodies of water and are international in character, modify the course of the commerce of the world, and their status is therefore a matter of international concern."

If opinions may differ as to the merit of any or all of the

foregoing suggestions, there surely can be no difference as to the necessity of determining with the least delay practicable what our future Latin-American policy is to be. "Preparedness" for defensive war is demanded by the country notwithstanding the immense burdens it entails. It involves many besides strictly military problems, and among them one of the most serious is for what contingencies we are to prepare and for what causes we are to be ready to fight. Shall we preserve unchanged our traditional attitude as the champion of every American state against foreign aggression without regard to its consent or request or its preference to take care of itself or to seek some other ally than the United States, and without regard to the surely incurred hostility of the aggressive foreign Power? It has often been claimed and sometimes effectively asserted that the United States in its own interest and for its own welfare must firmly resist any surrender of independence or cession of territory by an American state to a foreign Power even if the same be entirely voluntary. Suppose, for example, that an American state undertakes to permit an oversea Power to plant a colony on its soil, or to convey to it a port or a coaling station, is the United States to resort to war, if necessary, in order to defeat the scheme? These are only some of the inquiries which go to show the necessity of a speedy and comprehensive revision of our Latin-American policy. The replies to them involve possibilities which must be taken into account in any intelligent estimate of the kind and measure of military "preparedness" the United States ought to initiate. Obviously our "preparedness" means one thing with the co-operation of Latin America secured through the American Concert suggested, and a wholly different and much more difficult and burdensome thing without such co-operation. The difficulties of arranging such a co-operation are not to be underrated. Yet the exigencies of the situation are apparent and threaten not merely the United States but all American states. It is matter of self-preservation for each—and each should realize the vital interest it has in supporting a Concert which is formed on lines broad enough to cover all measures essential to the security of all, which is wholly defensive in nature, and which carefully abstains from any unnecessary impairment of the sovereignty of each.

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